What is the KOMSOMOL?

Igor Ilyinsky

The year 1978 has special significance for the young people of the USSR, since their largest and most popular organisation—the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League—has turned sixty. Another big event of this year is the 18th YCL Congress and the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students which will be held in Cuba this July.

The Soviet Komsomol is sixty years old. During this period the YCLers have performed a great many glorious deeds—on the battlefield and at construction sites, factories, collective and state farms, schools and institutes and research centres. They have also made a great contribution in the arts. In all the accomplishments of the Soviet people, the share of Soviet youth, and its militant vanguard, the Komsomol, is truly outstanding.

This small booklet does not attempt a full account of the Komsomol and its history of glory and heroism. Nevertheless, we do hope that it will help provide an understanding of what the Komsomol is, how it was organised, and the duties and functions which it carries out.

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"Thank you–glorious banner of our vigorous youth. Thank you–Union of Young Leninists, eternally inspired with revolutionary enthusiasm, ardent creativity and selfless energy. Lead the youth of the Soviet land forward to work and new achievements under the banner of Lenin's Party in the name of Communism, and for a happy future for all mankind."

L. I. BREZHNEV

VLKSM

The initials for the VSESOYUZNY LENINSKY KOMMUNISTICHESKY SOYUZ MOLODEZHI (the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, or Komsomol for short).

The name of the Komsomol organisation—also referred to as the YCL (Young Communist League)—is made up as follows:

ALL-UNION because it unites in a single movement the Komsomol organisations of all the fifteen Union Republics which make up the USSR, and which are in turn comprised of the more than 100 nationalities and national groups that constitute the Soviet people. The members of the Komsomol speak different languages, but they also have one language in common—the great language of communism;

LENINIST because Lenin stood at the cradle of the young communist movement. The profile of the leader of the October Revolution is imprinted on the cover of the Komsomol membership card. Every young person who becomes a YCL member signs, as it were, the manifesto adopted by the 6th Congress of the YCL organisation of the Russian Federation, which includes the following passage: "Not for the sake of fine-sounding words, not out of a desire to bear the highest of all names, and not only as a mark of respect to honour our former great leader,

are we taking this decision. No, we are adopting it in order that the working youth of all the peoples making up the USSR, together with the vanguard of the young people–the Komsomol–shall be imbued with a single will and the firm determination to learn to live, work and struggle in the Leninist way, to carry out Lenin's behests. . .";

YOUNG COMMUNIST because the Komsomol is an organisation of like-minded young people and fighters for a cause, who have dedicated themselves to the attainment of a single great goal, the name of which is Communism. The Komsomol is the energetic assistant and immediate reserve force of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union;

LEAGUE because the members of the Komsomol are united not only by their ideological affinity, but also by the common aim of their activities, good organisation, and a single system of discipline. Every member proudly wears the YCL badge on his chest.

HOW THE KOMSOMOL CAME INTO BEING

Komsomol is an honoured word, one that ranks alongside the most revered concepts such as Party and Motherland. Indeed, how could it be otherwise when 140 million Soviet people have passed through the Komsomol school of education and class steeling, daring and courage. In the years of their youth they became closely attached to the Komsomol, as if to their own brother, an enduring attachment that they retain for the whole of their life.

The Komsomol is the first assistant of the Communist Party in all its affairs, and is its main reserve. It nominates its best representatives for membership in the Communist Party, which has received altogether some 14 million members from the Komsomol since the founding of the youth organisation.

Each year, seven out of every ten candidates for Communist Party membership have Komsomol recommendation.

The Komsomol organisation is one of the finest memorials to the greatest of thinkers and revolutionaries of all time–Lenin. He was the first to conceive the idea of creating a union of the youth of the Land of the Soviets, and took an active, direct part in its establishment.

As far back as 1899, in his article, "An Urgent Question", Lenin drew attention to the fact that among the working youth of Russia there was to be observed an impassioned, irrepressible enthusiasm for the ideas of democracy and socialism. The draft resolution, "On the Attitude to the Student Youth", prepared by Lenin for the Second Congress of the RSDLP * (1903), states that the Congress welcomes the stepping up of revolutionary initiative among the student youth and invites all organisations of the party to render every assistance to this youth in its efforts to organise itself. Shortly before the 1905 Revolution, Lenin said he considered it necessary to campaign more widely and more boldly to recruit the youth, especially young workers, into the Bolshevik groups.

The Bolsheviks actively sought to draw the younger generation into the revolutionary struggle through their participation in both legal and illegal organisations, through the trade unions, and through workers' cultural and educational societies. The youth took part in the strike movement, in demonstrations, and in the activist detachments, and helped in the distribution of pamphlets and newspapers.

A typical biography for that period was that of

* The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. From 1917 it became the RSDLP(B)—the Party of Bolsheviks.

Vasily Alekseyev–"the little Bolshevik fire-brand", as he was affectionately called by the seasoned revolutionaries of Petrograd (now Leningrad). At 13 he was handing out leaflets, at 14 he took part in strikes, and distributed the Bolshevik newspaper, *Pravda.* At 15 he became a member of the Bolshevik Party, and at 18 he was the leader-instructor of a political study group, and was elected a member of the underground regional committee of the Party. There were not a few like him. Well-known names are Oscar Ryvkin, Pyotr Smorodin, Yelizaveta Pilaeva, Nikolai Fomin, Ivan Tyutikov, Ivan Skorinko. . .

But just before the February Revolution of 1917, the Party decided that it was necessary to set up an independent revolutionary youth organisation. In the situation then obtaining, however, when anyone who expressed opposition to the tsarist autocracy was hounded down, such an organisation could not become a mass movement. It had to work underground. The most progressive, politically conscious of the youth also collaborated with the Party, and joined its ranks.

At the same time, the necessity for determining the relationship of the Party to the organisation of the youth became all the more important. Lenin had given thought to this task in 1916, in an article, "The Youth International", in which he set out a number of principles which should be observed by the Marxist party in regard to its relationship to the youth organisation.

Lenin considered that the task of creating a communist union (or league) of the youth should be regarded as inseparable from the struggle of the proletariat for its social, economic and political rights, and the struggle to draw the mass of the workers into the revolutionary movement. The most effective form in which the youth could be drawn into the

class struggle he envisaged as a revolutionary, organisationally independent union of the youth, operating under the guidance of the Party.

In "The Youth International" article, Lenin formulated the principles which should govern the mutual relations between the Party and the youth organisation, and defined the basic methods of Party guidance, which served as the foundation on which the mutual relations between the Communist Party and the Komsomol were built, and which remain in force today. Lenin and the Communist Party considered that the best form in which the youth could be mobilised for the struggle for socialism was a united independent youth organisation—communist in its aims and tasks, mass in its composition, and acting independently as regards its methods of work.

In February, 1917, the people of Russia rose and overthrew the hated autocratic order. A bourgeois Provisional Government was set up. The Bolsheviks knew, however, that it was not capable of meeting the basic demands of the working people. The Party mounted a vigorous campaign of work among the masses, including work with the youth. Small, isolated youth groups sprang up and grew rapidly, and the first mass youth organisations of the workers were formed.

The scale of the youth movement was at its greatest in Petrograd, where the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party, at a meeting in March, 1917, considered the question of conducting work among the youth. In the middle of April, 1917, upon the initiative of the Vyborg Bolsheviks, a meeting of youth delegates was held. Assisting in the work of the meeting was Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin's wife and helper. The meeting decided to form a Petrograd union of working youth. The young Vasily Alekseyev, whom we have already mentioned,

became one of the organisers and leaders of the union. At the same time, upon the initiative of young worker-Bolsheviks from the Putilov works, a Narva-Peterhoff youth organisation was formed. In June, 1917, a Socialist Union of Working Youth was established in Petrograd.

At this same time youth unions were organised in Moscow and other cities of the country.

Representatives of the pseudo-revolutionary parties—Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries—tried to turn the youth away from the Bolsheviks, away from active revolutionary struggle, saying that the youth should not concern itself with politics, but should concentrate on educating itself and on cultural work. They expounded the laissez-faire philosophy, and urged youth organisations to be non-political in their activity.

The question of youth organisations was the subject of special discussion at the 6th Congress of the Party of Bolsheviks, the same congress at which the decision was made to prepare for an armed uprising. The Congress was held in July, 1917. The Party at that time had a semi-legal status, but Lenin had to remain in hiding to avoid arrest. The Bolsheviks were still being hounded.

The Congress came up with a clear directive: "At the present time, when the struggle of the working class is passing over to the stage of direct struggle for socialism, the Congress considers the provision of assistance in the establishment of mass socialist organisations of the working youth to be one of the most urgent tasks of the moment, and charges Party organisations with the duty of giving maximum possible attention to this work."

The essence of the programme of action was clear: "Whoever has the support of the working youth—to that one belongs the future." The Bolsheviks had

faith in the strength and maturity of the younger generation which, fearlessly, with revolutionary boldness, was loudly speaking out for itself. The decisions reached at the 6th RSDLP(B) Congress had a profound effect on the history of the young proletariat movement of the Land of Soviets. They marked the beginning of a new stage in the youth movement.

The Great October Socialist Revolution brought about a fundamental change in the lives of the younger generation of Russia. The triumphant march of Soviet power extended the scale of the youth movement.

In July and August of 1918, on Lenin's initiative, preparations began for the first congress of the Union of Worker and Peasant Youth. An organisational bureau was set up to arrange the convening of the 1st All-Russia congress. Party organisations rendered great assistance to the youth unions in the various cities. This made it possible, on 29 October, 1918, to hold in Moscow the congress which proclaimed the founding of the Komsomol. Once, in the evening, after a session, congress presidium members met Lenin.

Those present recalled how Lenin bombarded them with questions—How many workers were at the congress? What about the peasants? And how many intellectuals? How did they all stand, politically? What was the attitude of the youth toward their parents? Were the young men and women helping to overcome illiteracy? How were the youth studying at school and at home? Did they make use of the libraries? Who, from the past, were their idols, and who did they want to pattern themselves on? What was the attitude of the unions of working youth of the Third International to the city and village "cultural-educational circles", where intel-

lectuals hostile to Soviet power sometimes predominated? How were the city youth faring as regards food? And in the village? Were the youth interested in attending lectures? Were instruments available for them to form amateur orchestras? How did they spend their leisure time? What were their chief amusements? What sort of songs did they like most? Were delegates at the congress writing regularly to comrades who had gone to the front? How had the work gone at the congress in formulating the Programme and Rules? What part were the factory youth playing in raising labour productivity? Did they go on excursions to the forest? Go boating? Did they play *gorodki*? Did they like chess? Who wrote for the Bolshevik factory newspapers and journals? Did the young people enjoy working? Were they putting out any leaflets? How were they conducting their demonstrations? What sort of things were they discussing? And many more questions in similar vein.

These questions show once again the extent of Lenin's concern for the affairs of the youth, his close interest in its development and welfare.

Sixty years have elapsed since those October days of 1918 when 175 delegates and 19 consultative participants resolved to create a Russian Young Communist League, and declared: "Our voice will resound over all the earth, calling to our banner the revolutionary youth of the whole world!"

The first Komsomol members numbered altogether not more than twenty-two thousand. But they were twenty-two thousand young revolutionary fighters, inspired by the grand idea of remaking the world.

The Komsomol represented a revolutionary communist youth organisation of a new type. It occupied an important place in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat and in Soviet society. "With the

Party always!"—this slogan, born at the First Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, is today, too, the basic principle underlying the activity of the Komsomol organisation.

A SOURCE OF STRENGTH

Born in the storm of the Revolution, hardened in the crucible of class battles, the Komsomol is a true son of the Bolshevik Party which carefully nurtured, trained and made hardy its trustworthy battle reserve. The Party has protected the Komsomol from "false friends", and has helped to determine the general direction of its work, and the current tasks. The Komsomol constantly feels the paternal help and support of the Party, and from the Party leadership derives strength for new great accomplishments for the glory of the Motherland. In the difficult years of unprecedented trials, and in joyful creative work, the Komsomol has always followed the Party, has always been its true and reliable helper.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the first Marxist party which worked out the theoretical basis and the forms and methods of guiding the revolutionary youth, and has applied them in practice in the building of socialism and communism. The Party's guidance of the Komsomol does not have the character of tutelage, petty regulation or administration. The CPSU's relationship to the All-Union YCL is one based on ideological influence, conviction, advice and recommendation. The kinship of the two organisations is explained by their ideological-political unity, and their common world outlook and programme of tasks and aims. As Leonid Brezhnev remarked in one of his speeches: "It is natural for young people to look to the future because the future belongs to them. They

follow the Communist Party because the Party is leading the working people to the future, towards a great goal, which has always attracted and inspired the front-ranking youth—the goal of communism!"

In the process of building socialism and communism the CPSU constantly seeks to improve still further the forms and methods of its guidance of the Komsomol. This is a question that is always under discussion in one form or another at all Party congresses, and at many plenary sessions of the Central Committee and in the Politbureau and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU. In working out its policy, the Party, at every stage of the struggle for communism, guides the practical activity of the Komsomol, and indicates the main goal and the concrete tasks. Congresses and plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Party provide guidance to the Komsomol as to the spheres and the manner in which the efforts of the youth can be, and need to be, applied to the greatest effect.

Our ideological opponents, falsifying history and the present-day activity of the Komsomol, try to misrepresent its role in the life of society, and to set the youth against the Komsomol, and the Komsomol against the Party. In recent years the question of the relationship between the YCL and the CPSU has been the subject of violent attacks by bourgeois ideologists, who try to portray the Party's guidance of the Komsomol as "Party dictatorship", "pressure", or as "instruction from above". They carry on about a "stifling of initiative", and a "blind carrying out of directives", and repeat the old Trotskyist slogan about taking "an independent road", disregarding the experience of the older generation.

All this, of course, is untrue. The Party is in-

terested in exactly the opposite. It wants the youth, including the Komsomol, to take an active part in the building of communism and to display to the maximum its initiative and creativity. This is the whole point of the existence of the Komsomol and its fostering by the Party. Like all organisations of young people, the Komsomol requires assistance and support. Especially when it is remembered that the Komsomol is always young, and never gets any older: in 8-9 years the membership of the organisation is completely changed; every year 4.5 million young people join its ranks, and roughly the same number leave upon reaching the age of 28.

Notions about "youth leading the way", and slogans calling for "total independence" for the YCL, and for "equality" for the youth organisation with the Party, which the present-day revisionists and opportunists are still trying to propagate, are not only unsound but are also harmful, because they cloud the judgement of the youth and distract them from the true revolutionary path.

Practical experience over the many years' existence of the Komsomol has shown the objective necessity for guidance by the Party. Firmly convinced of the correctness of the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Komsomol considers the Party's cause to be its own cause also. The organisation whose aim is to unite the youth with the object of taking part in the revolutionary transformation of society, will not be able to achieve this aim separated from the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, without the Party's ideological, political and organisational guidance. This guidance is not imposed on the Komsomol from above. The necessity for such guidance is recognised by the youth themselves, who freely acknowledge it and who have embodied the principle in the YCL Rules.

In 1918, at its first congress, the Komsomol realised the need for and expediency of the Party's guidance. The Komsomol organisations themselves decide all questions that come before them. The Komsomol has considerable funds at its disposal and decides its own budget independently. It produces its own newspapers and journals, has its own publishing houses, and also its own Komsomol educational establishments and other institutions.

Throughout the whole of its 60-year history, the Soviet YCL has always been conscious of the concern of the Communist Party, its constant attentiveness towards the youth. Why all this concern and attention?

In the first place, because of the role of the Komsomol as a loyal assistant of the Party, as a mass-initiative socio-political organisation and school of communism for the youth, a role in the life of Soviet society which is constantly growing. The Komsomol helps the Party ideologically and organisationally to rally around it the broad mass of Soviet youth, to mobilise the strength, knowledge and energy of the younger generation for carrying out the programme of building communism. The Komsomol is the Party's active assistant in furthering the development of the state and the economy, in the cultural sphere, and in creating the material and technical base of communism.

Secondly, because the Komsomol is a reserve for the Party, a source from which the Party draws its fresh forces. Today, Komsomol members account for more than 70 per cent of all those taken into the Party. Young people up to the age of 23 may join the Party only through the Komsomol. Every year, thousands and thousands of Komsomol activists advance to responsible positions in the economy, in the Soviets, and in trade-union organisations.

Thirdly, the Party is concerned to ensure an unbreakable unity and continuity between the older and younger generations of revolutionary fighters. Communists have never made any secret of their efforts to bring up the younger generation in the spirit of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, in the spirit of dedication to the cause of the Party. This is precisely the reason the Party is concerned that the Komsomol should do everything in its power to educate the youth, in the widest sense, ensuring its ideological unity and continuity of the revolutionary spirit from generation to generation.

Lenin repeatedly pointed out the vital importance of this unity and continuity, and the Party, likewise, has continued to stress its importance. At the 12th Party Congress in 1923, it was emphasised that the strength of the Party depended on its success in establishing a continuous bond between the youth and the older generation of revolutionaries, consolidating in the ranks of the Party everything that was enduring from among the revolutionaries of both generations.

Today, developed socialist society is faced with more complex problems than those that had to be solved in the past. This means that new and higher demands are made on the youth, including the Komsomol. The youth are developing character more rapidly, and the level of their knowledge, interests, cultural needs, and capabilities is growing at a great pace. They are growing numerically also, and now account for nearly half of the population of the Soviet Union. The growth in numbers and higher level of development of the youth, and the demands made by scientific, technical and social progress have made for an even greater concentration of attention by the Party on the youth and the Komsomol, on whom the solution of future problems largely depends.

The Komsomol itself has changed substantially: in 1966 the organisation had a membership of just over 23 million, and now, twelve years later, it already has nearly 38 million members. And six out of ten Komsomol members now have a complete secondary or higher education, compared with 1946, when the Komsomol had a total of only 62 thousand members with comparable education. The Komsomol has become appreciably "younger": over 78 per cent of its members are under the age of 18. The scope of its activities has widened considerably.

In view of these important changes concerning the youth and the Komsomol, the Party, in the conditions of developed socialist society, has strengthened the Komsomol leadership. The decisions of the 23rd, 24th and 25th CPSU Congresses, in which an extensive programme of work was mapped out for the Komsomol at the present stage, were of exceptional importance for the activity of the youth organisation. In accordance with the decisions taken at these congresses, members of the Komsomol now taken into the Party continue to work actively in the Komsomol until they assume other Party responsibilities. Two resolutions of the CPSU Central Committee which have great importance for the entire activity of the Komsomol are: "On the 50th anniversary of the All-Union Leninist YCL and the tasks connected with the communist education of the youth" and "On the work of the Krasnoyarsk territorial branch of the Party with regard to guidance of the Komsomol". The questions of the education of the youth, and of Party guidance of Komsomol organisations are the subject of constant attention and discussion at the plenary sessions of all regional and territorial Party committees, of the Party Central Committees of the Union republics, and of most of the city and city-district Party committees.

Great interest in the youth and the Komsomol is shown by the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and personally by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, L. I. Brezhnev. His speeches at Komsomol congresses, at plenary meetings of the YCL Central Committee, and at other Komsomol functions constitute important political and programme documents in which new concrete tasks are put before the Komsomol. Many of the documents of the CPSU Central Committee and of the Soviet government deal with questions connected with the work, education, everyday life and recreation of the youth.

In the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and of the Union and Autonomous Republics, and in the territorial, regional, city and district Soviets of People's Deputies, twelve thousand commissions dealing with youth affairs have been set up, whose members include more than 83 thousand deputies, and in the work of which hundreds of thousands of activists take part. Questions connected with the employment, training, education, and all other matters affecting the youth are being more and more frequently discussed in the local Soviets of People's Deputies.

There are now more than twice as many young deputies in the composition of the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and of the Union and Autonomous Republics as there were in 1966. More than 720 thousand young people work in local Soviets, of whom about 452 thousand are Komsomol members. The Komsomol takes part in the management of state and public affairs, and in deciding political, economic and social and cultural questions. This right is conferred upon it by the Constitution of the USSR.

In accordance with a decision taken by the presidium of the All-Union Central Council of Trade

Unions (AUCCTU), commissions for work among the youth have been set up in the trade-union Central Committees, in republic, territorial and regional councils and committees, and in city, district, and all factory, plant and local committees.

The trade unions and the Komsomol together concern themselves with the development of the work and social activities of young working people, with drawing them into the movement for communist labour, with raising their work qualifications and general-educational and cultural level, and with creating for the youth the required conditions for their work, daily life and recreation. Factory, plant and local trade-union committees, and the managements of enterprises, institutions and organisations consider the questions of bonus payments for young workers, the allocation of living accommodation for them, labour protection measures, dismissals of young workers, and the utilisation of funds for the development of cultural and sports activities, with the participation of a representative of the Komsomol committee of the enterprise, institution or organisation in question. One million and eight hundred thousand Komsomol members have been elected to trade-union bodies, more than a million work in the People's Control organisation, and some three million give their services in the voluntary People's Patrols (public-order patrols which assist the Soviet militia).

Representatives of the Komsomol sit on the boards of the ministries of higher and specialised secondary education, of public education, of culture, and of the committee responsible for physical culture and sport, and are included in the AUCCTU Presidium and the Presidium of the Central Committee of DOSAAF (a voluntary society assisting the army, air force and navy) etc. This makes it possible for Komsomol or-

ganisations to exert a direct influence on the work of law-making and executive bodies and the work of public organisations, and gives them the opportunity to decide more effectively all questions relating to the satisfaction of the needs and requirements of the youth.

Under the Rules of the CPSU, Komsomol organisations have the right to exercise a broad initiative in the discussion and placing before Party organisations of questions dealing with the work of enterprises, collective farms and institutions. The leading Party bodies give close attention to proposals coming forward from Komsomol organisations. In recent years, as a result of suggestions made by the Komsomol, important decisions of principle relating to questions of work, study, everyday life and recreation, with respect to the youth, have been taken by the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government.

The youth learn from the Communists how to conduct the revolutionary work and struggle. In all fields, wherever young people are working, members of the Party make every effort to help them develop and acquire knowledge and experience.

ORGANISATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

From the first years of its existence the entire activity of the Komsomol has been built on the foundation of Lenin's ideas concerning the youth movement, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. The principles elaborated by Marx, Engels and Lenin for building the party of the working class, also form the theoretical basis of the YCL–taking into account, of course, the specific features of the Komsomol as an organisation of the youth. The fact that the Kom-

somol arose as an organisation having a class character also determined the principles of its ideological and organisational structure, and these, in turn, determine the rules governing the internal life of the organisation, on which the daily activity of the Komsomol is built.

The Komsomol is a voluntary union of young people sharing a common outlook. The acknowledgement of Marxism-Leninism as the sole genuine scientific philosophy of life constitutes the ideological and intellectual basis for the uniting of the youth in a single organisation. Ideological unity is the most important condition ensuring the effectiveness of the Komsomol as a militant revolutionary organisation.

However, as Marxism-Leninism teaches, ideas are becoming a material, constructive force only when ideological unity is cemented organisationally. The ideological and political nature of the Komsomol determines the organisational principles of its structure. At the same time, how the organisation is built, and how it operates, to a great extent determines its efficiency in accomplishing ideological and political aims and tasks.

The whole history of the Soviet YCL shows convincingly that the existence in the USSR of a single socio-political organisation, acting of its own volition and uniting in its ranks the best representatives of the youth of all social backgrounds and of all the nations and peoples making up the USSR, plays an important role in the political consolidation of the younger generation around the Communist Party.

The uniting of all social groups and different age-groups of the youth in the framework of a single organisation creates more favourable conditions for the everyday guidance of the youth movement by the Party, and makes it possible to channel the energies

and strength of the entire youth into furthering the interests of all the people making up the Soviet Union and to raise the effectiveness of the participation of the youth generally in the political and working life of the country, and, on this basis, to satisfy more fully the vital interests of the young people. Faithful observance of the Leninist ideological-organisational principles in the structure and activity of the YCL has always served and continues to serve as the guarantee of all the successes of the organisation.

The Komsomol is guided by the Party. But it is independent organisationally. What does this mean in practice?

– The Komsomol has its own Rules, and its own organisational structure: a network of republic, area, regional, city, district and primary organisations.

– The Komsomol has its own budget, and possesses extensive material and technical facilities of its own. The USSR Constitution gives it the right to own property. This provides the Komsomol with the possibility of being an organisation in which not only are many of the needs, interests and requirements of the youth manifested and formulated, but also satisfied to a considerable extent.

– The youth organisation puts out its own publications, both centrally and locally.

– It has its own permanent staff of Komsomol workers, which it maintains out of its own funds, and a multi-million force of activists throughout the country.

– The internal life of the Komsomol is organised on the basis of decisions adopted by YCL bodies, meetings, plenary sessions, conferences and congresses. They determine the nature of the work to be done, the current tasks, and the distribution of forces.

– The general direction of the everyday affairs of the Komsomol is effected by the YCL Central Committee.

– The Komsomol is an independent juridical person in its relations with other public and social organisations of the USSR: trade unions, Soviets and cooperative organisations, and also state and economic bodies.

Such a position occupied by the Komsomol accords fully with Lenin's precepts concerning the principles to be observed in creating a revolutionary organisation of the youth. With regard to the question of its independence, as early as 1916, Lenin wrote: "... that is why we must decidedly favour organisational independence of the Youth League .. For unless they have complete independence, the youth *will be unable* either to train good socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism *forward.*" *

At the 3rd Congress of the Young Communist League of Russia (1920), where Lenin delivered his historic speech, there were many questions from those present. The delegate from North Ossetia passed up a note which read: "Our school is falling down." A delegate to the congress recalls that Lenin read the note, looked about the hall and, with a hint of a smile, replied: "Falling down? Then repair it!"

The answer was brief, but it said much. Less talk about shortcomings and omissions and more spirited action to put things right–that is the Komsomol way. Lenin's succinct reply, with its call for initiative and action, and its condemnation of helpless dependence, is just as potent today, too, in combating

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* V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 164.

any manifestation of passivity in the Komsomol's sphere of activity.

The principle of independence in the structure and activity of the Komsomol is of the greatest importance. The members of the Komsomol know that they, and only they, control their organisation, and that how its work proceeds rests entirely with themselves. This is a spur to their energy and initiative, and this provides the foundation for the development of independence. The YCLers are aware that what they don't do themselves, nobody else will do for them. By their own experience, sometimes including their mistakes, and in their own organisation and amongst others of a similar age, the youth receive their first lessons in social work and learn the meaning of communism. Thus proceed their self-development and self-education.

In political questions the Komsomol is always guided by the decisions and directives of the Party, which, however, has never considered it necessary to interfere in less vital matters, but has always sought to help in shaping general policy, in determining the main direction to be followed. This means that the Komsomol itself decides the questions of what methods and forms it will use to put this policy into practice.

The Party, in determining the general aims and tasks, and broad content of the activity of the Komsomol, provides a practical basis for the appearance and development of initiative and self-directed activity in the members of the youth organisation. This is important not for its own sake, but only if such activity is directed so that it is of benefit to society. The enthusiasm and activity of Soviet youth grow from year to year, not unexpectedly, but because the Party puts before the Komsomol ever more responsible and difficult tasks. This inspires the youth in

their quest for creative activity and their desire to perform daring deeds and accomplish great exploits. The Komsomol is famed for the initiative it constantly displays, initiative which has given rise to hundreds and thousands of undertakings and projects, some of which later became nation-wide movements–for example, the socialist emulation movement, the drive for economy and thrift, the movement for communist-style labour, etc.

The greater the scope and difficulty of the tasks given the Komsomol by the Party, the more resourceful must its members be. To carry out these tasks it is necessary to raise "the coefficient of useful activity" of every branch of the youth organisation and the Komsomol as a whole. How is this to be achieved? It can be done if not only the majority, but all members show concern for and work at the task at hand, if they think more boldly, more critically, work creatively, and are always active, always questing.

The source of the growth of Komsomol initiative and activity is to be found in the raising of the cultural and educational level of the membership, and in the ability to so order the work that the personal interests and requirements of each are rationally combined with the interests of the organisation. Independent activity flourishes to the fullest extent where, together with the efforts to strengthen discipline and responsibility, there is concern for the working conditions, daily life and recreation of Komsomol members, and where, in demanding from a YCLer that he strictly carry out the tasks assigned him, all necessary conditions are created for the realisation of his rights, and every support is given to all reasonable initiatives and promising beginnings.

In the conditions of developed socialist society, the system of information in the internal life of the

Komsomol is being constantly improved. To an ever greater extent, the executive bodies of the Komsomol report back to the members, strengthening ties with the activists and the broad YCL membership. There emerge new forms of independent action by the united youth, and social principles are developed in the work of the YCL committees.

One fact testifying to this is that a majority of the YCL primary organisations are headed by non-staff, part-time secretaries. In the YCL executive bodies alone, there are more than eight million elected members. Some 88 per cent of the YCL members are carrying out various Komsomol assignments.

The decisions of the 25th CPSU Congress and the 18th YCL Congress provide for the Komsomol and all Soviet youth fresh vistas for the display of initiative and for bold enterprise and creative quests in the spheres of work, science, culture and art. And this constitutes a pledge for the further development of initiative by the Leninist Komsomol and for its still greater organisational independence.

YCL RULES, A LAW FOR THE KOMSOMOL'S ACTIVITY

The Komsomol is an alliance of like-minded young people, who not only adhere to common political principles, but also have the same moral outlook. The members of the alliance have a common conception as to man's morality, and how his relations with others—in an organisation and in society as a whole—should be built. These general ideals have to be affirmed in practice.

Many of the rules and demands of Komsomol life are not written down. But the most important

of them are embodied in the YCL Rules, which constitute a law covering the whole of Komsomol life. The Rules express the political credo and define the aims and tasks of the Komsomol and its place and role in Soviet society, and lay down the most important principles and forms for organising the practical activity of the YCL, including ways and methods. The Rules help ensure that the activity of the Komsomol is communist in its direction, and also help ensure the unity of purpose and action of the multi-million army of its members. Without this the Komsomol could not exist or function as a militant, revolutionary organisation.

The Rules are adopted by the highest ruling body of the Komsomol–the All-Union YCL Congress. The Congress alone is empowered to confirm or introduce amendments to the Rules. This adds special force to them, ensuring that they carry the greatest weight in determining the life and activity of the union of Young Communists.

The Komsomol is a constantly developing socio-political organism which acts as an integral part of the life of society. Consequently its Rules are not permanently fixed and immutable. They are constantly brought up to date, in keeping with the tasks and conditions of the given stage of the life of the country, incorporating all the best that has already been developed by the creative work of the Leninist YCL. Only those fundamental principles that are related to the structure of the Komsomol and organisation of its internal life remain unchanged in the Rules.

The majority of the basic principles relating to the structure and activity of the Young Communist League were established in the Rules decided on at the First YCL Congress. Adopted in 1918, the Rules re-

tain much of their substance to the present day, although there have repeatedly been substantial amendments to them—for example, in 1920 at the 3rd YCL Congress, in 1926 at the 7th Congress, and in 1936 at the 10th Congress.

Other changes of a more minor nature, reflecting the need to introduce new forms of organising the work of the Komsomol, were subsequently incorporated in the Rules by the 11th YCL Congress in 1949, the 12th Congress in 1954, and the 13th Congress in 1958.

The Rules in force at the present time are those confirmed by the 14th Congress in 1962 and amended in part, to bring them up to date, by the 15th, 17th and 18th Congresses.

These changes made in the Rules are directed at raising the qualitative level of the YCL membership, consolidating ranks of Komsomol organisationally and politically, enhancing the role of the primary organisations, and improving still further the forms and methods of its work.

The first duty of a YCL member is to apply the Rules in everyday life. There are occasions when this proves to be no simple matter. Not infrequently it demands the will to fight when one encounters apathy and civil cowardice, and bureaucratic and other forms of obstruction, and calls for a striving to eliminate shortcomings in the life of the collective, both in the sphere of production and socially, and the shortcomings in one's comrades—and sometimes, too, it means striving to overcome one's own shortcomings. To persuade others, to gain someone's confidence, to bring something to completion—this, too, requires struggle. To apply the Rules in one's daily life means to be a true member of the Komsomol in practice, to be a fighter for the Komsomol cause.

THEY HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO LEAD THE WAY

The Rules of the Komsomol begin by defining who is eligible for membership in this organisation: "Any young person in the Soviet Union can become a member of the Komsomol who accepts the Rules of the Komsomol, who takes an active part in the building of communism, who works in one of the Komsomol organisations, carries out the decisions of the Komsomol and pays membership dues."

This formulation contains the principal conditions the observance of which is mandatory for all YCL members. What are these conditions? Let us look into their meaning and significance.

Young people who join the YCL ranks share common ideological and political views and regard the communist ideals as their personal principles in life. They look upon the Komsomol as an organisation which helps them to attain these ideals, to strengthen their ideological conviction, and to gain experience in socially useful and political work.

In joining the Komsomol a young person is aware that this gives him no privileges except one: to work hand in hand with his like-minded comrades, and to work with all his strength and knowledge, for the great cause of building communism. He knows that by doing so he becomes part of the great force called Komsomol, e.g. an *organisation*, and that from now on the laws of unity, discipline and responsibility, which guide the YCL actions, also become the principles of his personal life, and his standards of behaviour.

Unity, discipline, responsibility make up the foundation on which the Komsomol is built. And the main element that unites the forces of the So-

viet youth is the YCL Rules which contain the political credo of this organisation.

Acceptance of the Rules, the accuracy of adherence to which is an indication of the YCL member's political maturity, is the primary requisite for joining the organisation. To accept the YCL Rules means to stand firmly on communist positions, to abide by the exacting requirements and responsibilities which the Rules impose on all its members. It also means readiness to fulfill these requirements and responsibilities.

The Komsomol is not only an organisation of people who share common ideals but also an organisation of people who actively work toward these ideals. Therefore the right to be a member of the Komsomol must be lived up to not only in words but in practical deeds, by good results in study or work, by *actively participating in the building of a communist society.*

An understanding of the YCL Rules and a conscientious attitude to work and studies are indispensable conditions for membership in the Komsomol, but they are not all. A YCL member must not only study well or work well, but must participate in the activities of the primary organisation to which he belongs. It is precisely because the Komsomol, with its multi-million membership, is made up of hundreds of thousands of primary organisations, that it can operate like a well-geared mechanism. Abiding by the general standards of the Komsomol activity, by its common goals, each one of these organisations, be it a local YCL organisation at a factory, an industrial plant, a collective farm, a school or a college, at the same time carries out its specific tasks. And it is out of these small and simple deeds that the Komsomol scores its successes and builds up its prestige.

The Leninist principles, on which the Komsomol rests and from which the principles of YCL membership are derived, are of a dialectical nature. A good example showing the dialectical character of the way the Komsomol functions is the fact that all of its decisions are taken collectively, after preliminary discussion and, sometimes, long debate, but as soon as a decision has been adopted it becomes binding on every member of the organisation, regardless of whether he or she agrees with it, for it reflects the will of the majority. This is one of the basic laws of the Komsomol, and a person cannot join it unless he accepts it.

And, finally, the following condition must be met by those wishing to join the Komsomol: all Komsomol members are required to pay membership dues which make up the material foundation of the organisation. For without the dues it would be impossible to publish newspapers, magazines, and books for youth. Membership dues are also used to build museums commemorating hero-YCLers, tourist camps and youth recreation centers, to finance various Komsomol activities inside the Soviet Union, and on an international scale, and to maintain the YCL apparatus. The payment of membership dues is also of great educational importance, for it makes it possible to judge the discipline of a given YCL member and his attitude to the League.

Now, what requirements are made on applicants to the Komsomol? And what is the general policy on the question of expanding the YCL ranks?

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Young Communist League have never regarded the matter of the composition of the Komsomol and its growth as having organisational significance only; they look upon it as a major political question. For the growth of Komsomol membership means the

Lenin's speech at the 3rd YCL Congress (1920) set out a long-term programme for the Komsomol's participation in the building of a new society. About 600 young men and women who had come to Moscow from all parts of Russia heard that speech. "The Komsomol should become a front-line organisation ready to help in every job, an organisation with its own brand of initiative and enterprise," said Lenin.

According to the 1920 census, 80 per cent of the young people in the Soviet Republic could neither read nor write. The Komsomol tackled illiteracy, one of the worst problems inherited from tsarist days. As they themselves learned to read and write, they also taught others.

1918. The Soviet Republic was invaded by the armed forces of fourteen capitalist countries. Komsomol members rose in defence of their homeland. In those days you could often see notices on doors: "The Komsomol Committee is closed. All have gone to the front."

Born on the battlefields of the Civil War (1918-20) the Komsomol faced the severest test of all, that of war. Young soldiers were handed their YCL membership card together with a rifle. In those difficult days more than 200,000 members of the Komsomol fought in the Civil War.

The Civil War was over. But the country's industry was in ruins. Many old factories, plants, railways and power stations had to be restored and many more new ones had to be built.

In 1929 the Komsomol called on the young people of the Soviet Union to join in the nationwide drive for building up the economy. Tens of thousands of young volunteers set out for the building sites of the socialist industry. Forty years ago this was the first blast furnace built by Komsomol members at Magnitogorsk. The furnace was built in record time.

These girls were among the 13,000 Komsomol members in Moscow who helped to build the Moscow Metro, the first in the USSR.

On June 22, 1941, the Soviet Union was invaded by the nazis. The Great Patriotic War (1941-45) of the Soviet people for their freedom and independence began. Again, as in the Civil War years, Komsomol members were among the first to defend their native land. They knew what they were fighting for. Their youth had not been altogether peaceful and calm, but it had been a happy youth. They were young, they enjoyed life, they dreamed of building new towns and new factories, of pioneering new fields of science. They would not now allow the nazis to trample on their vision of the future! Never!

КОМСОМОЛЬСКИЙ БИЛЕТ
№17409056 *
Симонов
Год рождения 1921
Январь
Февраль
Март
Апрель
Май
Июнь
Декабрь
Погиб смертью храбрых в бою с немецкими захватчиками
29.4.43г.

This is the bloodstained YCL membership card of Alexander Smirnov, a young man who valorously gave up his life in battle against the Nazi invaders so that those who live today could carry out his dreams.

The heroic war feats of Komsomol members which have no match in history live on in memory and legend. Time will never dull in our heart the feeling of gratitude and pride for the immortal exploit of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a partisan girl.

The spring of 1945... The Red Banner of Victory rose over the Reichstag of the fallen German Reich.

growth of unity of the younger generation and of its role in society. Thus, it is only natural that Soviet society should be interested in having all young men and women in the country, or at least most of them, benefit from YCL experience. "To be a Communist means that you must organise and unite the entire young generation. . .," said Lenin at the 3rd YCL Congress. Following this advice, the Komsomol has always sought to expand its ranks and to be a truly mass organisation.

The Komsomol has been and will continue to be the vanguard of the Soviet youth, the organisation which sets an example of the correct attitude to work and studies, and to civic duty. Is there a contradictions between the policy of expanding the ranks of the YCL (with 4.5 million young people joining it every year) and the requirement that it should play the role of the vanguard of the Soviet youth? No, there is no contradiction. For when we refer to the Komsomol as the vanguard of the Soviet youth, we think of it not in terms of its size (more than half of the Soviet youth of Komsomol age are members of the organisation), but in terms of its importance as the guiding and organising force of our young people. So in this sense the Komsomol is and will continue to be their vanguard. To fulfill this role it makes ever more exacting demands on those wishing to join it, and selects those whom it regards as truly the best representatives of the Soviet youth.

This, however, does not at all mean that the Komsomol is a kind of "elite" organisation whose members are all-knowing young men and women specially trained to meet the League's strict requirements. Such a view conflicts with the function of the Komsomol as an *educational* organisation where young people develop communist convictions not through formal exhortation and instructions, but by working

and studying together and coming under the beneficial influence of the collective.

The required quality of membership is maintained by observing Lenin's *principle of individual selection.* This means that Komsomol organisations admit to membership not all who wish to join the YCL, but only the best, the most socially active and ideologically aware young men and women. Each application for Komsomol membership is considered separately, with the personal qualities of each applicant being assessed individually. Individual selection means that in their everyday work members of the Komsomol test the applicants by giving them various assignments and checking on their attitude to work, and their political and moral qualities.

But even then the question of admission is not settled unless the applicant has recommendations which must be given by members of the Communist Party, or the YCL, and the Council of Young Pioneers. Each recommendation is a political guarantee, a statement that the applicant is equal to the high standards of the YCL. The people who signed such recommendations bear responsibility to their organisation for the reference they gave as regards the political work and moral qualities of the applicant.

The Komsomol was founded as the organisation of the proletarian youth. Today the YCL is an organisation of young workers, collective farmers, office employees and college and secondary school students. In other words, the Komsomol represents all sections of the Soviet youth. Over the past several years the proportion of college and secondary school students has considerably increased. Nevertheless, the backbone of the Young Communist League continues to be working class youths.

By drawing young men and women into its ranks the Komsomol educates them to be true collectivists

who are ready to fight for the common cause not only in times of trial and emergency but at any time. The Komsomol helps them to accept Communism with their heart and mind.

WHO CAN JOIN THE KOMSOMOL?

According to the Rules, membership in the Komsomol is open to young people who have reached the age of fourteen. To join the Komsomol they submit an application to the YCL organisation of their collective. No one is obliged to join the Komsomol; those who apply for membership do so entirely on their own. In their application they explain their motives for wanting to join the Komsomol. They also fill out special YCL questionnaires and submit recommendations. An applicant needs to have two recommendations from two YCL members or one recommendation from a member of the Communist Party. The Council of Young Pioneers * can also give a recommendation for an applicant to the Komsomol, the recommendation having the same standing as that of a member of the YCL. Applications are considered by the YCL committee of the primary organisation and then by the general meeting of the YCL members who decide if the applicant is eligible for membership. The decision of the general meeting is submitted for approval by the bureau of the YCL district (or city) committee. After the decision of the primary organisation has been endorsed by the YCL bureau of the district (or city) committee, the applicant is admitted to the organisation, and his, or her,

* The Young Pioneers is a communist organisation for children set up at schools. The Council of Young Pioneers is the leading body of the Pioneer organisation at a school.

seniority as a YCL member is counted from the day the general meeting passed its decision.

A YCL member can remain in the organisation until the age of twenty-eight. Unless he holds a full-time Komsomol post to which he is elected by other YCL members, a Komsomol member, on reaching the statutory age limit, ceases to be a member of the organisation.

DISCIPLINE AND DEMOCRACY

What is done to ensure unity of action of millions of YCL members, and hundreds of thousands of local Komsomol organisations? How are the multifarious activities of the League directed? How is its militancy maintained? And what steps are taken to strengthen the Komsomol both organisationally and politically?

The basic principle of the organisational structure and activities of the Komsomol is democratic centralism, which is the key to its successes. The requirements stemming from this principle largely determine all the other principles of the YCL organisational structure, and many of the standards of the League's activities, the nature of the relationship between its members, and the forms and methods whereby the League conducts its work.

Centralism and democracy—this is not a formal, mechanical combination of two opposites but the best way of building a proletarian revolutionary organisation and conducting its activities. This method, which has been evolved by the Communist Party and its founder Lenin, makes it possible dialectically to combine strict discipline and organisation, on the one hand, with the development of initiative of its members, on the other. And indeed, the subordination of

the minority to the majority is a democracy for the majority. But at the same time this implies strict discipline.

The principle of electivity of the leading bodies, from the lowest to the highest, and their accountability to the rank-and-file members of the League is another manifestation of democracy. But the election of these bodies is an act of great responsibility on the part of all those who participate in it.

Another important principle of democratic centralism consists in that all the decisions of the higher bodies are binding on the lower bodies. The democratic character of this principle is obvious because the leaders are elected by the members of the organisation themselves.

The obligations which the Komsomol imposes on every member govern his behaviour and his actions. It should be noted, however, that these obligations are assumed voluntarily. Besides, under the Rules of the organisation, every member of the Young Communist League enjoys extensive rights which enable him to fulfill his obligations.

Democratic centralism has been the basic principle of the organisational structure of the YCL since its inception. This principle ensures a single, integral policy line, clarity of purpose and harmony in the activities of all Komsomol organisations.

What does centralism mean in relation to the structure of the Komsomol and its activities?

The ideological basis of centralism is the recognition by all YCL members of one ideology, one communist platform, and the same tasks of struggle. Centralism is embodied in the unity of ideological and organisational principles of the YCL, in its Rules, and in the fact that the Komsomol is an integral, centralised organisation. This means that the Komsomol has a pattern of discipline which applies to all

its members, that the minority is subordinated to the majority, and the decisions of all the higher bodies are binding on all the lower bodies. Unity of action of all YCL members is a requisite without which the Komsomol would cease to be an integral organisation with iron discipline.

To ensure the principle of centralism the YCL follows the principle of proletarian internationalism; this means that all the Komsomol organisations of the Soviet autonomous republics, and regions and territories of the Russian Federation are integrated into the Komsomol not on federal principles but as part of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League.

Centralism also means that organisationally the Komsomol rests on a territorial-and-production principle. Its primary organisations are initially set up at places where members of the Komsomol work or study and are then integrated into district, city, regional and territorial organisations. This makes it possible to take into account the requirements of different groups of young people (workers, farmers, college students, and school pupils) and the specific features of individual primary organisations, and to direct their activities towards solving problems that are common to these districts, cities, and regions.

In the organisational structure of the Komsomol and its activity the principle of centralism is also seen in that leadership in the Komsomol is exercised by the Central Committee of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League. This is necessary for formulating one united political line to be followed by all its members, and also for coordinating the work of the Komsomol organisations and for directing it toward the common goals.

At the same time the internal life of the Komsomol shows that it operates as a genuinely democratic

organisation. The most important evidence of this is that all YCL bodies are elected, that they report on their work to their electorate, that all these bodies can be replaced by electoral process from the bottom to the top. Members of the Komsomol have the right to elect and be elected at election meetings, conferences and congresses. A higher YCL body has the right to communicate its views to the rank-and-file YCLers concerning the candidate.

The highest bodies of Komsomol organisations are: the general meeting (for primary organisations), the conference (for district, city, area, regional and territorial organisations), and the congress (for the Komsomol organisations of the Soviet sovereign republics and for the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League).

Accountability is an effective means of controlling the work of the various committees of the YCL and of verifying the work of its leaders. Members of the Komsomol hear reports at meetings, conferences and congresses, analyse the work and the personal qualities of individual members of a given committee, and point out the shortcomings and faults in their work. The existing regulations require that group leaders, secretaries of factory, shop and other primary organisations report to the rank-and-file members annually; the leaders of district committees, city committees, regional committees and territorial committees twice a year; and the leaders of the Central Committee of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League and the YCL Central Committees of the Soviet republics once every four years.

The make-up of the leading Komsomol bodies is renewed, being regularly replenished by promising and active members who are promoted to the top jobs in the organisation. Komsomol leaders who fail to discharge their duties as they should are relieved

of their posts when rank-and-file members demand it.

The Komsomol is directed by democratically elected collective bodies which are part of its organisational structure. Collective leadership is effective in that it makes it possible to work out and take the best possible decisions and in this way reduce to a minimum the element of chance in the decision-making process, because decisions taken by one person are more open to error than those made by a collective. One leader, however experienced and talented, cannot take the place of a collective.

The principle of collective leadership requires that Komsomol leaders heed the counsel of members of the elected bodies and activists of their organisations, and also take into consideration their suggestions and criticism. It is the duty of every Komsomol member to point out the errors made by any Komsomol leader. Discussions and collective decision-making are inseparably linked to personal responsibility of individual members for the job entrusted to them. The ability to sense the mood of a collective and to express its opinion, and the readiness to heed the will of the collective—such is a mark of political maturity of a Komsomol worker and activist.

The work of improving the YCL apparatus, of drawing more members into its activity, and of strengthening its ties with young people is greatly facilitated by the fact that the Komsomol committees regularly report on their activity to the members. The committees inform the YCL members about their work in periods between plenary meetings, conferences and congresses, and hear reports presented by members of elected bodies in the primary organisations on the work they have done.

For the entire work of the Komsomol it is highly important that its rank-and-file members constantly

raise their participation in social work. Indeed, this is a crucial aspect of the work of the Komsomol. The purpose is to draw rank-and-file members into the activity of the League by assigning them various tasks and by verifying their fulfilment.

Over the past years, Komsomol members and all Soviet young people have become more socially active, and this is particularly because the Komsomol committees have conducted their work with the aim of meeting more fully the multifarious interests and requirements of different groups of Soviet young people. But to look after every Komsomol member does not mean that the League should only serve the interests of individual members. What the YCL tries to do is to help develop and influence these interests.

Criticism and self-criticism serve as an indicator of the degree of democracy within the YCL; they are a powerful weapon in the struggle against shortcomings. The more effective this criticism and self-criticism, the healthier is the Komsomol collective.

The principle of democratic centralism has been improved and perfected throughout the existence of the Young Communist League. It is also being further developed today and will be developed in future with account taken of the changing historical conditions in which the organisation operates. This principle is a time-tested organisational tool which has enabled the Komsomol to fulfill the tasks set before it by the Communist Party.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

The rights and duties of the YCL members, which are set down in its Rules arise from the goals and tasks of the organisation.

The duties of the YCL member, which he assumes voluntarily, make up a legal foundation for the demands that the Komsomol organisation he belongs to can make on him. Strict implementation of the duties as laid down in the Rules forms the essence of Komsomol discipline. A member's attitude to his duties is a measure of his observance of Komsomol discipline.

The most important duty of the YCL member is actively to contribute to carrying out the great programme for the building of communism, to prepare himself for a life in communist society whose credo is peace, labour, freedom, equality, fraternity and happiness for all the nations in the world.

The goals of the Komsomol as a whole are the same as the goals of every member of the organisation. And for the realisation of them many millions of young men and women devote all their energy, strength and knowledge. The principal criterion in judging a member's dedication to the communist ideals and his social activeness is his work record or academic standing. That is why the Rules of the Komsomol require that its members set an example for others in work and studies, raise labour productivity, master industrial skills, promote all that is new and progressive, perfect their professional skills, strictly observe labour discipline and carry out civic duties.

This statutory requirement is designed to make YCL members front-rank workers and the best students. YCLers never condemn those of their comrades who are unable to do something. But the organisation will severely criticise those of its members who do not work to the best of their ability and who show an irresponsible attitude to work. Comradely persuasion is the means by which the Komsomol helps such members to fulfill their duties

and responsibilities (if they wish to remain in the organisation). In this way the Komsomol conducts the moral and political education of its members and helps them to develop the requisite moral qualities and to understand that socially useful work is not only a necessity but also their primary personal need.

We live in the age of the scientific and technological revolution when big and small discoveries in science and technology are made daily. Our social life is being enriched with new ideas and is becoming more and more complex and varied. And if a young worker adopts a slack, indifferent attitude to work, he will inevitably fall behind his mates. And if school pupils and college students pay attention only to their academic curriculum and show no interest in what is new in literature and art, science and technology, their education will be inadequate. That is why the Rules of the YCL require that its members persistently enlarge their knowledge, develop an interest in world culture and science, and study the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism.

The Komsomol would not be able to fulfill its task as an educator and organiser of the Soviet youth if its members were preoccupied with its internal activities. The YCL enjoys the respect of young men and women of our country because it draws them into its ranks and encourages them to participate in its various activities and to join its circles of political studies. For the YCLers, implementation of this task is part of their duty, as laid down in the Rules.

Every YCL member is a political fighter. He must be able to explain the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; he must be alert to all that goes on around him, keep abreast of world developments, and be able to answer, clearly and to the

point, any political question, however complex it might be.

Words carry conviction when the speaker is sincere, when his every action and deed match what he says. The YCL member is a public figure; what may pass unnoticed with someone else is visible to all in the case of a YCLer. What he does or fails to do affect not only his personal prestige but the authority of the Komsomol as a whole. Therefore the YCL Rules require that all Komsomol members be honest and truthful, responsive and attentive to people, combat any manifestation of bourgeois thinking, and put public interests above personal interests.

The Komsomol rejects apathy and indifference. That is why its member does not put up with ideological backwardness or retreat in the face of difficulties. He must not only work well, but must also set a good example for others by striving selflessly for the building of a new society.

All Soviet citizens are used to phrases like "socialist competition", "taking on additional pledges", and "work-drive" referred to production. And this means that millions of YCLers take on heavy work loads because this is required by the five-year economic plans, because this is what Soviet society needs. And the YCL members carry out these obligations resolutely and conscientiously, being convinced that what they are doing is right. The Rules of the YCL tell its members: "You must serve as an example for the Soviet youth by discharging your public and social duty. You must be a dedicated patriot of the Soviet Motherland, ready to give all of your strength, and, if necessary, to sacrifice your very life."

YCLers displayed great heroism during the 1917 October Socialist Revolution, in the period of collectivisation (in the 1930's) and in the Great Patriotic

War.* And in peacetime, too, thousands of Soviet young men and women work selflessly; in them one can discern the same dedication that characterised the wartime heroes–Pavka Korchagin, Alexander Matrosov, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, and the Young Guardsmen (members of the underground organisation called the Young Guard that fought against the Nazis).

Since May 1945,** when the Second World War ended, there have been more than one hundred big and small wars waged on our planet. International imperialism has encircled the socialist world with military bases, and neo-fascists rear their heads from time to time in one part of the world or the other. And that is why the Komsomol, all of its members, regard it as their sacred duty to strengthen the Soviet Armed Forces, to get military training, to be vigilant, to build up their physical strength by taking up sport.

Great and important as the domestic tasks and problems of the Soviet state are, the YCLers must not be concerned about them alone as long as imperialism exists and hundreds of millions of young people in various parts of the world are being exploited and oppressed by it. The problems of the working-class youth fighting for their social and national liberation are of great concern to Soviet YCLers. They are aware that the strength of the socialist community depends on how closely linked the youth organisations of the fraternal socialist countries are and on how well united the family of the peoples of the USSR will be. Therefore the

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* The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against the Nazi invaders (1941-45).

** May 9—Victory Day, which is marked in the Soviet Union every year.

Soviet Komsomol members clearly understand the passages in the YCL Rules which point to the need for further strengthening the friendship of the peoples of the USSR, and the fraternal ties of the Soviet youth with the youth of the other socialist countries and with the proletarian and working class youth of the whole world. Owing to this stand, which is the stand of every YCL member, the Komsomol has become a genuine school of internationalism and solidarity, and has won great prestige and authority in the international youth movement.

The Komsomol would not have been able to achieve its important gains and victories if it had not been a militant, efficient and united organisation. And the basis for the unity of the Komsomol is its discipline. A true YCL member regards discipline not as something forced upon him from outside, but as part of his ideological conviction and his will to accomplish the set tasks. And the higher the level of consciousness of a YCLer, the more he identifies the discipline imposed by the organisation with his personal discipline. A YCL member is constantly aware of the importance of discipline and of his responsibility. He does not sit idly and wait until the organisation gives him an assignment, but is always ready to go into any problem, to point out shortcomings and mistakes and to offer suggestions for resolving outstanding problems. He shows that he is an active and disciplined member of the organisation by carrying out tasks assigned to him by the Komsomol, and by helping to improve its work generally.

Unfortunately not all Komsomol members are active and disciplined as they should be. There are, among them, some who would prefer to hide behind other people's backs, and who lack a sense of responsibility for the work assigned them by their

local organisation. The Komsomol, as an educational organisation, seeks to help a young person to get rid of his or her shortcomings and to learn to be disciplined and organised. The Rules of the Komsomol require that its members promote the militancy of their organisation and strengthen its unity, be active and self-reliant, point out shortcomings in the activities of the YCL and work towards their eradication and observe Komsomol discipline.

By conscientiously carrying out his civic and Komsomol duties, the YCLer acts as a truly free person, who rejects selfish individualism, and who understands that only a collective, an organisation, can create conditions for the satisfaction of his or her social interests and for the development of personality.

But of course no one can feel entirely satisfied by merely carrying out assignments, without being able to participate creatively in coping with the problems involved. Rights and duties are two parts of one whole. A Komsomol member who exercises his rights is one who has a correct attitude to his duties. It is noteworthy that the rights and duties of the YCL members are set down in the section of the Rules entitled "Members of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, Their Duties and Rights". There are no duties without rights, just as there are no rights without duties. And the better a YCLer discharges his duties, the stronger the Komsomol as a whole.

One of the most important rights of every Komsomol member is the right to elect and be elected to YCL leading bodies. Exercising this right he, together with other members, decides the question: who will lead the organisation? This right reflects the profoundly democratic character of the Komsomol where this and all other questions are decided

by collective bodies which the YCL members elect themselves. And if the YCLers make the right choice and take a responsible attitude to the elections, the organisation will benefit; on the other hand, if they fail to elect those who are the best in their midst, if they regard these elections as a formality, they have only themselves to blame for what they have done. The right to elect is not only a matter of honour, but also a matter of great responsibility.

Every YCL member is guaranteed the right to be elected to any of the Komsomol bodies, up to and including the YCL Central Committee. This means that a member who enjoys the trust of his comrades can be elected to a leading post in the organisation. And this possibility encourages many YCL members to become more active.

A situation may arise in which a YCLer disagrees with the point of view of the bureau or committee of the Komsomol organisation he belongs to. He might have suggestions for which he finds no support in these Komsomol bodies. And it happens sometimes that one person is right and the majority of his organisation is wrong. Therefore it is very important that every member of the YCL should be able to voice his opinion not only in his local organisation, but in all Komsomol bodies. The Rules of the YCL entitle all of its members to freely discuss—at meetings, conferences, congresses, as well as in the Komsomol press—all questions concerning the work of the Komsomol organisation or of the enterprise where they work, put forward proposals, openly speak out and defend their opinion before a final decision is taken.

A YCL member can do so by exercising the right to address questions, statements and suggestions to any leading body of the League, including the YCL Central Committee. But of course the organisation

This train will take them to Siberia, an unknown and fascinating land. In 1977 alone, more than 100 thousand young men and women set out for the newly developed areas to take part there in the construction of industrial projects of national importance.

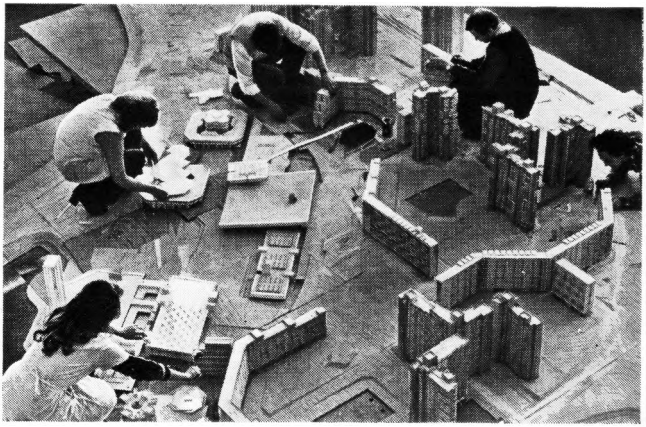
The Krasnoyarsk Hydro-Power Station is the biggest in the world.

Difficulties—and many fall to the lot of trail-blazers—do not deter young people. Their skill, their wish to see the result of their work and their irrepressible enthusiasm enable them to build great dams and cities, change deserts into oases, build factories in the tundra.

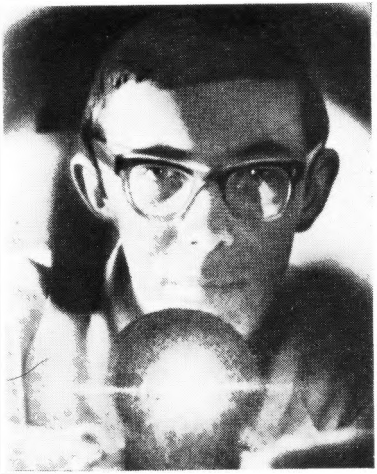
The 3,200-kilometre Baikal-Amur Railway (BAM) now being built through the permafrost region of Siberia is often called "the building project of the century". On completion the railway will open up the treasurehouse of the Eastern regions of the USSR. Eighty per cent of the builders of the new railway are young people.

For centuries this land lay fallow. Then in 1954 some 350,000 young men and women came to Kazakhstan and Siberia to put the virgin lands to the plough. In a short period of time they brought 36 million hectares (about 90 million acres) of rich black soil under cultivation and set up 425 large grain producing state farms.

The newly developed areas are not just coal mines and factories. These young engineers also build new towns and settlements, new schools and kindergartens, cinemas, shops and stadiums.



Future engineers, doctors, teachers and agronomists. They fill thousands of lecture halls, libraries and laboratories.



Fifteen million young men and women are engaged in scientific work of various kinds. There are 250 thousand clubs and societies where budding scientists can exercise their talents. About 2,000 Komsomol members hold advanced scientific degrees.

Ballet is an art for the young. Nadezhda Pavlova has won prizes at national and international ballet contests.

On February 10, 1978, when chess Grandmaster Anatoly Karpov successfully defended his diploma thesis in the department of economics at Leningrad University, he also learned that he had for the fifth time been chosen as best chess player of the year.

Physical culture and sport are within everybody's reach. About 50 million people, mostly young people—one fifth of the population—engage in sports.

Young people of the Soviet Union cherish the aims of youth festivals, which manifest the friendship and solidarity of young people of all countries. Festivals help young men and women throughout the world to get to know one another better, to discuss their mutual problems and further to strengthen the unity of democratic youth in their struggle for peace, national independence and social progress.

may adhere to its position. And if the superior YCL body supports it, the dissenting Komsomol member must submit to its decision: this is one of his statutory obligations.

It should be noted that the Rules require that YCL members engage in criticism and self-criticism, and fight against ostentation and conceit. The Rules entitle members to speak out openly at Komsomol meetings, conferences, congresses, and plenary meetings and criticize any other YCL members and any YCL body. Criticism is both the right and the duty of every YCLer. Criticism is an effective weapon in the drive to raise the level of responsibility and discipline. The frequency with which a Komsomol member makes use of this weapon, and the purpose for which he uses it, largely characterise his outlook and his attitude to life and to society.

But since criticism, even the most objective criticism, is unpleasant for the one who is being criticized, some people, while formally recognising its necessity, nevertheless try to suppress it. Thus, the Rules point out that persons responsible for such suppression or for the persecution of the critics "shall be called to account".

Nobody is perfect. Sometimes a YCLer commits an offence for which the organisation may decide to punish him. The misdemeanour is discussed by the YCL local bureau, or at a Komsomol general meeting. And this discussion takes place not behind closed doors but in the presence of the offending YCLer, who, according to the Rules, has the right to be present at Komsomol general meetings, and at YCL bureau or committee meetings when his case comes up for discussion. This rules out possible misunderstanding and enables the organisation to arrive at a correct decision.

Communism is not a society of loafers, but the most highly organised society in the history of mankind. Every YCLer is to regard Communism not as something that will be presented to him as a gift, but as a society which he will build with his own hands. He must realise that personal discipline, industriousness, and a readiness to serve society are necessary for achieving both common and personal objectives. These are the aims the Komsomol is called upon to serve, and therein lies the essence of the rights and duties of all its members.

THE EXECUTIVE BODIES OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

YCL Congress is the Highest Executive Body

The Komsomol congress is the highest executive body of the Soviet Young Communist League. It takes decision on all major questions concerning the League's work, and its decisions are binding on all organisations of the YCL, all its members.

The congress affirms the formation of the League of Young Communists, gives it a new name or changes the old one. The congress adopts, reviews or may alter the League's Rules, elects its Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission, hears and approves reports of the YCL Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission and outlines the general direction of the YCL's activity and its current tasks.

The congress determines the frequency of its convocation. In the first years after the YCL's establishment the congress met once a year and later, once every two years. According to the present YCL Rules its congress meets once every four years.

The number of delegates to the congress has also changed over the years. The 1st Komsomol Congress in 1918 was attended by only 194 delegates, whereas the 18th YCL Congress in 1978 was attended by 4,981 of the most active YCL members. The representation quota is set by a plenary meeting of the YCL Central Committee. This principle was first laid down in the Rules adopted by the 3rd Komsomol Congress (1920). Representation quota varies depending on the size of membership; this makes it possible to have fair representation of young people of different professional and occupational background at the congress. For example, the quota of representation at the 18th YCL Congress (1978) was one delegate per 7,500 YCL members.

A congress delegate is an authorised representative of the entire Young Communist League, not just of the particular organisation which has elected him to the congress. Thus, in forming his opinion on any question under consideration by the congress, he is guided not by narrow local interests but by the interests of the Komsomol as a whole. A delegate has the right to bring up any matter before the congress.

The All-Union YCL Central Committee

The YCL Central Committee is housed in a four-storey building in Bogdan Khmelnitsky Street in Moscow, not far from Red Square. In this building are kept the Banner of the Young Communist League and sacred Komsomol relics including the first ore from the Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Plant built by YCLers in the '30s, and the YCL membership card of Yuri Gagarin, the world's first spaceman. From here, during the last war, young underground fighters and guerillas went to battle, going beyond

the frontline and into the enemy's rear; from here volunteers left to work on virgin lands, on the new projects in Siberia and the Soviet Far North; here Soviet Olympic athletes receive friendly advice and encouragement before important sports meets; and here is where YCLers hold celebration meetings in honour of Komsomol heroes.

The Central Committee is always full of people; it does not have that somber quiet typical of many offices. But this is perhaps understandable, for the Central Committee is the headquarters of an active, militant organisation, the Komsomol. As the highest executive body of the Young Communist League in between its congresses the Central Committee carries out extensive and often complex tasks. It verifies the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of YCL congresses and the observance of the League's Rules, directs the work of the local organisations and gives them practical assistance.

The number of Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission members is determined by the congress. At present, the YCL Central Committee has 239 members and 59 alternate members.

Elected to the YCL Central Committee are secretaries of the YCL Central Committees of the Union Republics, territorial YCL committees, Komsomol functionaries and activists, foremost workers in all sectors of the national economy, artists, actors, servicemen, students, in short, the most experienced and respected YCLers.

As a collegiate body the Central Committee discusses all major questions relating to the work of the Young Communist League at its plenary meetings which are convened, according to the present Rules, at least once every six months. To ensure continuity and efficiency in its work the Central

Committee elects at its plenary meetings standing executive bodies—the Bureau and the Secretariat.

The Bureau directs the entire activity of the YCL between the Central Committee's plenary meetings, while the Secretariat carries out the day-to-day organisational and executive functions, such as the selection and training of YCL personnel, verification of the implementation of resolutions and decisions, etc.

All day-to-day activities are carried out by the Secretariat with the help of the Central Committee's staff which includes the most able and experienced Komsomol functionaries. The Central Committee administration is divided into departments and sections whose number and organisation vary in accordance with the tasks being tackled at a given time. The YCL Central Committee elects 10 secretaries, each being responsible for a definite area of the League's activity.

The Central Auditing Commission is a standing body which is elected by the YCL congress and is accountable only to the congress. It sees to it that questions are promptly and correctly handled in the YCL's central bodies, and checks the YCL's financial activity, in particular, the implementation of its budget. At present the Commission has 59 members.

Executive Bodies of Local YCL Organisations

The highest YCL executive bodies organise the League's activity with the help of a network of local organisations.

Under the YCL Rules the highest body of a district, city, area, regional or territorial YCL organisation is its conference, while the highest body of a republican organisation is its congress. In between conferences and congresses of YCL organisations in

the Union Republics their highest bodies are respectively the district, city, area, regional or territorial YCL committees, or the YCL Central Committee of a Union Republic. The plenary meetings of these committees elect their bureaus and secretaries. YCL committees select and train full-time personnel and activists, organise and check the implementation of the decisions of higher YCL bodies; in short, they direct the entire activity of their respective organisation. The staff of full-time functionaries make up a working body of a YCL committee. The number of full-time workers of a local YCL body depends on its size and other specific conditions. The administration of each YCL committee is divided into departments and sections dealing with specific areas of YCL work.

The great majority of the committees of primary YCL organisations have no full-time functionaries, and all the work is done on a voluntary basis. Bigger organisations may have a full-time committee secretary, and still bigger ones, also a deputy secretary.

The YCL ranks are constantly growing, as is the scale of its activity and the scope and complexity of its tasks. These tasks often cannot be coped with by full-time functionaries alone. Thus it becomes necessary to achieve an optimal combination of a full-time staff and YCL activists–volunteers.

THE GRASS ROOTS OF THE KOMSOMOL

The Young Communist League enjoys great prestige in the Soviet Union because it concerns itself with everything Soviet society lives by and takes an active part in solving its problems. The source of strength of the Komsomol lies in the work done

by primary YCL organisations at factories and mills, on collective and state farms, in offices, universities and colleges and in Army units. These organisations in which most of YCLers' activity takes place, are the backbone of the Young Communist League, and the overall achievement of the entire Komsomol is made up of successes of these organisations. It is in the primary organisations where propaganda, campaigning and organisational work among the young people is conducted.

Primary YCL organisations are set up at factories, mills, state farms and other state enterprises, on collective farms, in the units of the Soviet Army and Navy, and at educational establishments, where there are at least three Komsomol members. The primary organisation is a form of uniting all YCLers in militant collectives regardless of social status and age, where their energy, skill and knowledge are put to creative use. Primary organisations provide an organisational framework for satisfying the interests and needs of young workers, collective farmers, college students and school pupils.

One of the key Leninist principles of Komsomol membership is that every YCLer, no matter where he or she may work or study, must be a member of and participate in the work of a primary organisation. It is only thanks to primary collectives that the many-million strong YCL is a well-governed and at the same time mobile organisation capable of quickly regrouping its forces in keeping with the tasks facing them at various stages in the development of Soviet society.

The primary organisation is a link between the YCL and all the young people in the country. Under the YCL Rules it has the right to admit new members to its ranks. The size and quality of the new membership and, consequently, the effectiveness

of the entire YCL's activity, its role in communist construction and in educating the younger generation, strongly depend on the demands it makes on those seeking to be admitted to the organisation.

The primary organisation is the basic link in the structure of higher YCL bodies. At their general meeting the members of a primary organisation elect its committee (or bureau) and delegates to the district (or city) conference.

Finally, the primary organisation is a powerful educational institution which plays a great role in shaping the young people's outlook. It helps create conditions for the proper development of personality, for the assimilation by young people of the ideas, ethics and psychology of collectivism. Here young people learn that serving the interests of the collective is the supreme moral value. Awareness of one's duty and responsibility, and readiness to be guided by the will of the majority and to sacrifice one's personal interests for the sake of public interests become the main factors governing the behaviour of a YCLer. In these conditions the abilities of young people are fully revealed and developed; each YCLer gives his or her best to the collective, and the best in the collective becomes the achievement of each of its members and promotes his or her development as an individual.

The primary organisation helps YCLers add to their knowledge, shapes their characters and draws them into various forms of social activity. It makes their life and work socially and politically meaningful. The rights and duties of a Komsomol member, which represent a specific link between a YCLer and the League and a factor guiding his or her behaviour, are implemented within the primary organisation. By encouraging a YCLer conscientiously to fulfil his or her duties or reprimanding him or her

for neglecting them, the primary organisation guides the development of the YCLer as an individual in accordance with society's standards and requirements.

The primary YCL organisation guides the activity of its work collective which is the foundation of socialist society, instils in YCLers and young people in general a communist attitude to work and to public property, and a sense of collectivism, and encourages them to take part in administering public and state affairs.

To give a political education to millions of YCLers by involving them in various Komsomol activities is not the only function of the primary organisation. Another sphere of its activity goes beyond YCL affairs and is concerned with the life of the entire collective. It consists in conducting educational work among the masses of young people who are not YCL members, and in helping the Party organisation, under whose guidance it functions, to carry out ideological and political work among the working people.

The highest executive body of a primary YCL organisation is its general meeting. It is convened at least once every three months at enterprises, construction sites and educational institutions which have more than 300 YCL members, at collective and state farms with over 100 YCL members, and at YCL organisations in production shops, sections, teams, college departments, classes and groups, school forms, etc.

A primary YCL organisation may be awarded a Red Banner, on decision by the YCL Central Committee; the Red Banner is a symbol of militant unity of YCLers who are totally devoted to their socialist Homeland and to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The YCL is a complex socio-political organisation and a well-governed body. This is made possible by the fact that it comprises a system of organisations with corresponding executive bodies, the lower bodies being strictly subordinated to the higher.

The YCL organisational structure undergoes changes in the course of its development. The bigger the YCL membership, the more complex its tasks and the greater the range of its members' requirements and interests, and the more efficient its structure which reflects changes both in the YCL itself and in the economic, social, ideological, political, and cultural life of the country as a whole.

Today the YCL is built on the territorial-and-production principle, its organisations being set up in keeping with the country's administrative and territorial division. In the early years, YCL primary organisations were not always set up on the production principle, but were rather tied to the members' place of residence. This was natural owing to the small YCL membership, to the fact that in those years far from every enterprise or village had enough members to form a cell.

As the number of YCL cells grew along with industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture, the emphasis of Komsomol activity shifted to that decisive sphere of human activity—labour. A change in the policy of admitting new members, with the YCL ranks being joined by great numbers of young collective farmers, intellectuals, students and school pupils, called for a change in the organisational structure of the Komsomol so that it would best meet the interests of these different groups of young people. From 1921 all YCL primary organisations

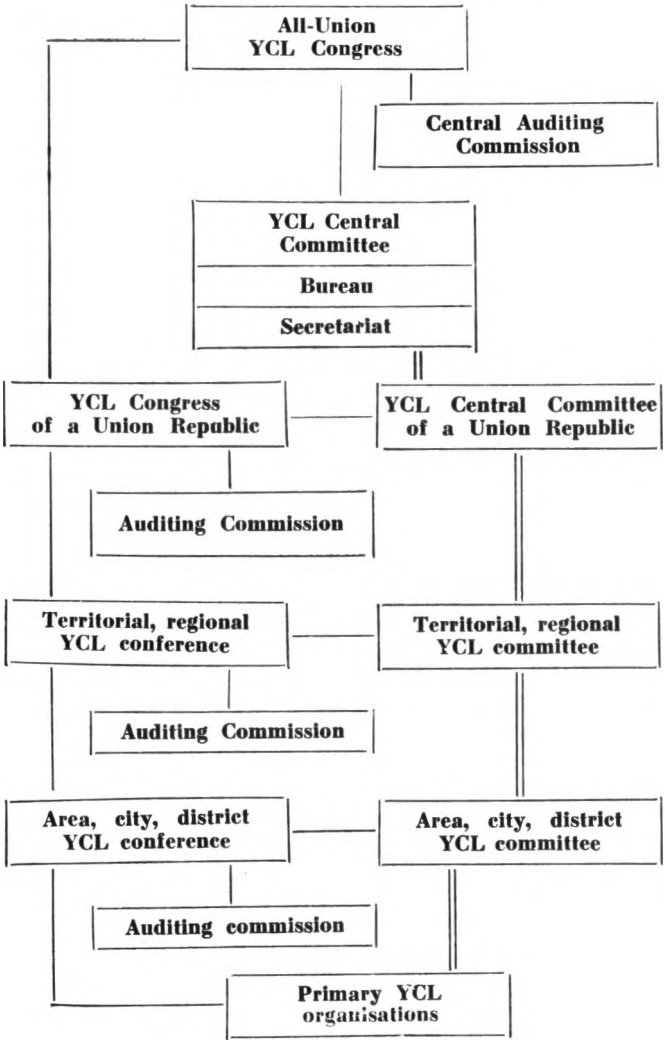
YCL Congresses

Congress No	Dates	YCL Membership	Number of delegates
1	October 29—November 4, 1918	22,100	194
2	October 5-8, 1919	96,096	429
3	October 2-10, 1920	482,342	602
4	September 21-28, 1921	475,000	614
5	October 11-19, 1922	460,000	392
6	July 12-18, 1924	822,000	996
7	March 11-22, 1926	1,780,000	1,462
8	May 5-16, 1928	1,960,000	1,084
9	January 16-26, 1931	2,897,000	1,232
10	April 11-21, 1936	3,981,777	1,103
11	March 29—April 7, 1949	9,283,289	1,362
12	March 19-27, 1954	18,825,327	1,334
13	April 15-18, 1958	18,092,538	1,236
14	April 16-20, 1962	19,400,000	3,878
15	May 17-21, 1966	23,050,700	3,831
16	May 26-30, 1970	27,028,301	4,695
17	April 23-27, 1974	34,000,000	4,729
18	April 25-29, 1978	37,807,399	4,981

began to be based on the work-and-production principle.

The Communist Party called on the Komsomol to carry out its educational work mainly in the production shop or section, i. e. the primary workers' collective where young people were employed and

Organisational Structure of YCL



where the collective's influence on them was the greatest. The YCL's activity increasingly came to acquire an educational character, with special emphasis on the individual approach. New conditions demanded closer organisational ties with individual YCLers. The further growth of the YCL ranks and an increase in the number of enterprises complicated the problem of direction of YCL organisations. Thus, in 1924-26, following the Communist Party's example, the Komsomol began to set up shop organisations and similar groups, known as YCL groups.

The 15th YCL Congress (1966) introduced changes in the YCL Rules with regard to the League's organisational structure. It was decided to create shop and similar YCL organisations at enterprises and offices which had more than 50 members, at collective and state farms with more than 20 members, and in educational establishments which had more than 100 YCL members. The committee of a big YCL organisation had the right to set up smaller primary organisations in the production shops, departments, sections, teams, college departments and classes and in school forms.

The development of the YCL structure over the years shows that any changes introduced in the structure have been designed to make it correspond both to the organisation's ultimate goals and to its current tasks, and better meet the demands of the given historical stage in society's development, with

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Note: In Union Republics which are not divided into regions, city and district YCL committees are directly subordinated to the YCL Central Committees of Union Republics.

account being taken of available organisational experience. Thus, the 17th YCL Congress (1974) introduced additional changes in the structure of Komsomol organisations. In order further to raise the level of the organisational and educational work of YCL organisations, to improve their structure and give them greater rights, enterprises, collective and state farms, offices and educational establishments which have more than 20 YCL members may set up, by a decision of the committee of the general YCL organisation, and within this organisation, smaller YCL organisations in shops, sections, teams, departments in offices and colleges, college classes, study groups, and in school forms, which would have the rights of a primary YCL organisation. When necessary, primary YCL organisations may be set up, subjcct to endorsement by the regional, territorial, or central committee of a Union Republic, at several enterprises which make up a production amalgamation and which are located, as a rule, in one or several districts in the same city.

THE YCL TODAY

Throughout the 60-year history of the Soviet Union its young people and its advance detachment, the YCL, have always been the first to tackle the difficult problems, have displayed courage and heroism, have worked selflessly in times of peace, and spared neither their strength nor their lives in defending the honour and independence of their socialist Homeland in time of war.

YCL members and all Soviet young people have been active at all important stages of the country's development—during the 1917 October Socialist Revolution; in the struggle against internal counter-

revolution and foreign intervention in the first years after the revolution; in the rehabilitation of the country's economy, in fighting famine and general devastation after the Civil War; in the first five-year periods of economic development; during the Great Patriotic War (1941-45) against the Nazi hordes that had treacherously attacked our country; in the rehabilitation of the war-ravaged economy; in the development of virgin lands, and in the building of new gigantic projects on which millions of young Soviet men and women are now working.

The Young Communist League has been awarded six different orders for its members' combat and labour exploits. These high awards are a token of our people's respect for the YCLers and for their services to the country.

Let us sce what part the YCL has played in the life of our society in recent years.

1976 is remembered above all as the year of the 25th CPSU Congress which drafted a long-term plan for further strengthening the Soviet Union's economy and raising the country's living standards, and a comprehensive Peace Programme. The tenth five-year plan for economic development adopted by the Congress has no equal in terms of the scope of its targets and has evoked great labour enthusiasm on the part of the Soviet people. This time young people also advanced many proposals which have the support of the entire country.

Young people play a key role in many branches of the economy. Every third machine builder and agricultural worker, and over half of the employees in instrument-making, radio electronics, light industry, construction and transport are men and women of YCL age. The members of the more than 500,000 Komsomol-youth collectives are united not only by their work but also by friendship, common

intellectual and artistic interests, and by a sense of comradeship and mutual assistance. Seventy-five per cent of the leaders of these collectives are under 30 years of age.

The key direction of the Party's economic strategy at present is toward greater efficiency and higher quality of work. This is a production task as well as a moral one in that it calls for persuading every young worker to approach the plans mapped by the Party as he would his personal plans, teaching him to make use of new scientific and technological achievements and advanced experience and to find new production reserves, and instilling in him thriftiness, discipline and a sense of organisation.

Now let us look at some concrete examples of young people's initiative.

YCL organisations have launched a drive for improving the workers' skill, for achieving higher quality of work and for safeguarding the good name of all manufacturing enterprises. For example, at the Lenin electric engineering plant in Moscow every second young worker has updated his skill in the last two years, while 8 out of 10 YCLers undertook to guarantee the quality of their products so that the products require no further checking.

Working together with the trade unions the Komsomol is conducting a nationwide young peoples' contest in scientific and technical innovations, in which 17.5 million young men and women are taking part. Thus, in the last two years over 2 million innovations, inventions and scientific projects were submitted by young people, the introduction of which in industry will save some 2,400 million roubles. The participants in the contest have solved many important problems of production and promoted the reconstruction and retooling of enterprises.

In the course of the contest they discovered new forms of collective search for technical improvement, and of creative collaboration of workers, specialists, scientists and students.

During the last few years intensive efforts have been made to achieve specialisation and intensification of agricultural production. Inter-farm cooperation and agro-industrial integration have been developing apace while the managerial system has been improved. Here also the YCL members were in the forefront. They readily give their energy and knowledge to improving conditions in the village and raising the efficiency of farm production. Fifty-five thousand Komsomol-youth work collectives are taking part in the drive to raise the standard of land cultivation and increase crop yields. The YCL has assumed responsibility for the construction of 1,500 big livestock complexes, 500 poultry factories and many other agricultural projects.

Young men and women greeted with enthusiasm the decision of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government on carrying out comprehensive socio-economic changes in the non-black-soil zone of the Russian Federation, which comprises 19 regions. The YCL designated this programme of land improvement and rural construction in the zone a shock Komsomol project of national importance. Fifty-five thousand young men and women from all parts of the country went to work in the non-black-soil zone. During summer vacations alone students' construction teams built facilities worth over 1,000 million roubles. A new life has come to this vast and important zone. New state farms are now being set up as well as other production, social, cultural and service facilities. In the current five-year period 170,000 families in the zone will move to well-appointed urban-type settlements.

Shock construction projects have become symbols of heroic labour exploits of the Komsomol. For a young person a "shock Komsomol project" means romantic quest, and a school of courage, skill and civic responsibility. Such was the case with the construction of the now famous Dnieper hydropower station (in the Ukraine) and the Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Combine (the Urals), the Zaporozhstal Steel Mill (the Ukraine) and the Turksib Railway (connecting Turkmenia and Siberia), the Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur and Bratsk, and the town and power plant on the river Angara (all in Siberia).

The army of young builders is over four-million strong. Between the 17th and 18th YCL Congresses (1974-78) they have completed 760 projects in industry, power engineering, transport and agriculture. In 1978 some 140 construction projects of national importance were declared shock Komsomol projects. The tradition of labour exploits is passed on from one generation to the next.

Just over four years ago a construction unit named after the 17th YCL Congress met at the Kremlin Palace of Congresses in Moscow before leaving for Siberia to build the Baikal-Amur railway (BAM), a project unprecedented in terms of scale and the complexity of the technical problems involved. Today every second BAM builder is a YCLer; there are 30,000 Komsomol members working on the BAM project. More than 35,000 young men and women are participating in the drive "I Am the Master of the Project". The closely-knit and efficient production teams, which were set up in a short time, are building the trunk railway at a fast pace despite the rigorous climatic conditions.

The Komsomol has also assumed responsibility for the building of the West-Siberian, Bratsk-Ust-

Ilim, Ekibastuz, South-Yakutian and other big territorial-production complexes outlined in the tenth five-year plan.

The 1980 Summer Olympic Games will be held in Moscow. The "Olympiad-80" projects rate special priority among other Komsomol projects. Over 10,000 young men and women are working on Olympic projects under the mottoes: "For the Olympics to Do Everything Excellent" and "The Komsomol Builds Olympic Projects!"

From the forming of shock production teams to a mass call for young people to take part in important construction projects, from the building of individual enterprises to sponsorship of the construction of whole territorial-production complexes and leading branches of the national economy—such was the road traversed by the Komsomol in the course of the economic, social and cultural development in the USSR. A Komsomol *putyovka* (the written recommendation given to the person going to work at a major project under construction) is a characteristic feature of Soviet life. The striving for being worthy of such assignment is an expression of the younger generation's devotion to the communist ideals, of their aspiration to help build a factory or a town "of their own". In the last four years over 500,000 young men and women have worked on major construction projects on Komsomol assignments.

The Leninist YCL is taking an active part in further developing and improving the systems of general secondary and vocational education of young people, and training of specialists for the national economy.

Our country's "knowledge industry" includes 149,000 general schools with an enrolment of over 40 million, 6,300 vocational schools where nearly

4 million young men and women learn worker's trades, and almost 5,000 universities, colleges and secondary specialised schools which annually train 9.7 million specialists with a higher or specialised secondary education.

The Communist Party calls for further improving the training of young people for socially useful work, for helping them to choose an occupation to their liking. Universal 10-year secondary education (up to the age of 17) has been introduced in the country. Secondary school graduates have an adequate knowledge of the fundamentals of science and good work habits. In the course of their practical training, working together with workers and farmers, young men and women develop a correct attitude to work and learn to become responsible members of socialist society.

The 25th CPSU Congress emphasised that the primary task of the Party's ideological and educational work is the shaping of communist consciousness, of a spirit of readiness to take an active part in building communism. Communist education is based on the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The ideas of Marxism-Leninism enrich man's inner world; they unite millions of people and inspire them to work for the common good, thus becoming an all-powerful constructive force. This is confirmed by the Soviet Union's history and by the exploits of the builders of communism today.

The education of young people takes place today amidst bitter ideological struggle, a battle for human minds and hearts. In their attempts to shake the communist convictions of Soviet people the bourgeois propagandists concentrate their attention on the youth, obviously counting on their lack of social experience and general immaturity. Characteristical-

ly, Western "Sovietologists" are careful not to mention those articles of the new Constitution of the USSR adopted in October 1977 which proclaim and guarantee the citizens' rights to education, choice of trade or profession and of a job to one's liking, and access to the treasures of culture.

The YCL conducts extensive work in the ethical education of young people, the aim of which is to help the young develop political and civic awareness. Among the cherished moral values of advanced socialist society are patriotism, internationalism and civic consciousness.

The Leninist Komsomol and all Soviet youth are justly proud of the Soviet Union's contribution to détente. There is a direct link between Lenin's Decree on Peace issued in 1917 and the Programme for the Further Struggle for Peace and International Cooperation, for the Freedom and Independence of Nations, advanced by the 24th and 25th CPSU Congresses (1971 and 1976). This continuity has been affirmed in the new Constitution of the USSR.

Young men and women of the Soviet Union are active fighters for peace, for putting an end to the arms race, for disarmament. A vivid proof of this is their participation in the worldwide campaign "No to the Neutron Bomb!". Millions of Soviet young people hold protest demonstrations and rallies and write letters and messages expressing their objection to the manufacture and deployment of the neutron bomb. They condemn the continuing brutal repressions by the fascist junta in Chile and the forces backing it and voice their wholehearted support for the peoples waging a struggle against military and dictatorial regimes.

The basis of all international activity of the Soviet YCL is its fraternal friendship and cooperation with

the communist youth unions in the countries of the socialist community, their participation together in the international democratic youth movement. The Komsomol is for strengthening and expanding in every way its contacts with the fraternal youth unions that are the militant vanguard of the progressive youth in capitalist countries. It staunchly supports the liberation struggle of the people, including young people, in the developing countries, their legitimate desire to establish a new, just international economic order, and has voiced its solidarity with the struggle of Asian, African and Latin American countries for independent social, economic and cultural development.

The 11th World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in Cuba, in July 1978, will mark an important stage in the cooperation of young people of the world. For the first time in the history of youth festivals it will be held in the Western Hemisphere, on the soil of socialist Cuba. This is highly significant, for the holding of the festival in Havana will be another proof of the prestige of the Cuban revolution, of the important contribution made by the young generation of the Freedom Island, by Cuba's Young Communist League to the struggle of the world's progressive youth. Soviet young people are preparing for the Havana Festival. Contests are being held in every YCL organisation, in every collective of young workers, for the right to represent the Soviet youth at the festival; this right will be granted to the best of the best.

Advanced socialism has furnished new conditions for the Komsomol's activity and development, and has further enhanced its role in managing state and social affairs. The new Constitution of the USSR, which affirms the great accomplishments of our people during the last 60 years, is a magnificent exam-

ple of true democracy. Forty-six million young men and women took part in the nationwide discussion of the draft Constitution, which became a school of democracy for the youth.

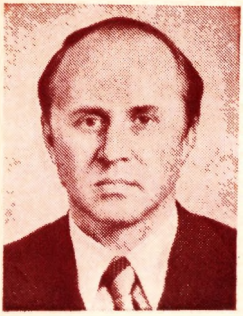
The Fundamental Law of our country is permeated with a feeling of confidence in and concern for the younger generation. It has created a basically new legal basis for YCL activity. Article 7 of the Constitution says that the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League participates, in accordance with the aims laid down in its Rules, in managing state and public affairs, and in deciding political, economic, and social and cultural matters. Article 51 guarantees the YCL conditions for successfully carrying out its functions. Under Article 113 the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League has the right to initiate legislation.

All this shows that in the last few years the Young Communist League has rallied its members still closer round the Communist Party and its Central Committee, that it has grown stronger organisationally and politically, that it has acquired new experience in the communist education of young people and has reached a high level of maturity. It is a truly mass and creative social and political organisation embracing all strata and groups of Soviet young people, who are united in their views and action.

The political and legal foundations, the organisational possibilities, the material and financial potentialities and the entire range of the forms and methods of the YCL's work have grown. The YCL's functions extend to all spheres of public life and continue to expand. The role of the YCL as a constructive and educational social force is generally recognised and continues to grow. In expressing and

representing the interests of the entire Soviet youth the YCL fulfils its main social function, which is to be the CPSU's assistant and reserve. This is proved by the history of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League whose 60th anniversary will be marked in October 1978.

Игорь Михайлович Ильинский
ЧТО ТАКОЕ КОМСОМОЛ?
на английском языке
Цена 30 коп.



Igor ILYINSKY was born in Leningrad in 1936, in a working-class family. He saw active duty in the Army and, upon discharge, worked at a construction site and a factory. A graduate of the Institute of Railway Engineers, he held a number of important posts in the Komsomol —secretary of the YCL District Committee, deputy department head at the YCL Central Committee, and editor-in-chief of the magazine "Komsomolskaya Zhizn". He is a candidate of historical sciences and a member of the Union of Soviet Journalists. Igor Ilyinsky is the author of books and articles on the problems of the youth. He lives now in Moscow and heads the research department at the Komsomol School under the YCL Central Committee.